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Profile

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Navy boatswain's mates
page 4

Air traffic controllers perform key functions

The strike by civilian air traffic controllers this past summer, along with their replacement by military controllers, has resulted in increased attention to the occupation of air traffic controller. People now realize that air traffic controllers perform a vital function. In the past year PROFILE magazine has featured stories on Air Force and Marine air traffic controllers, however the activities, qualifications, working conditions and opportunities for controllers in all the military services are similar.

The work of military air traffic controllers is like the work of civilian airport control tower operators. They are responsible for the safe, orderly, and speedy movement of aircraft into and out of airport control zones. They also control the movement of aircraft on the taxiways and issue flight clearance to pilots by radio. In the Navy, the landing areas may be on the deck of an aircraft carrier as well as an airfield.

What they do

—Control air traffic at airfields and on aircraft carriers.
—Direct air traffic by means of radio, radar and flashing light signals.
—Operate field lighting systems and traffic control lights.
—Communicate with aircraft by voice radio.
—Provide aircraft with information regarding air traffic, navigation and weather conditions, including local ceiling, visibility and cloud cover.
—Operate and make adjustments to ground-controlled approach systems.
—Interpret data shown on radar screens and plot aircraft positions.
—Assist in dispatching and exercising coordinated control of all flights.
—Maintain aeronautical charts and maps.
—Operate carrier controlled approach systems.
—Identify aircraft.

Qualifications and interests

Good speaking ability is essential in this career field. Also important is a good memory, the ability to do detail work and keep accurate records; the ability to work as a team member is requisite. It is helpful to be able to do repetitive tasks; to be resourceful; to have an interest in people, ideas and information; and to be capable in math.

Working environment

People working in this career field usually work in a clean, comfortable, office-like atmosphere. They work closely with others, are closely supervised and do mostly mental work.

Opportunities and schooling

Opportunities for placement in this career field are excellent for qualified personnel. Each service has its exacting qualifications and enlistment options.

Schooling typically includes 12 to 16 weeks of instruction at technical school with another year or more of on-the-job training before the air traffic controller is completely certified.

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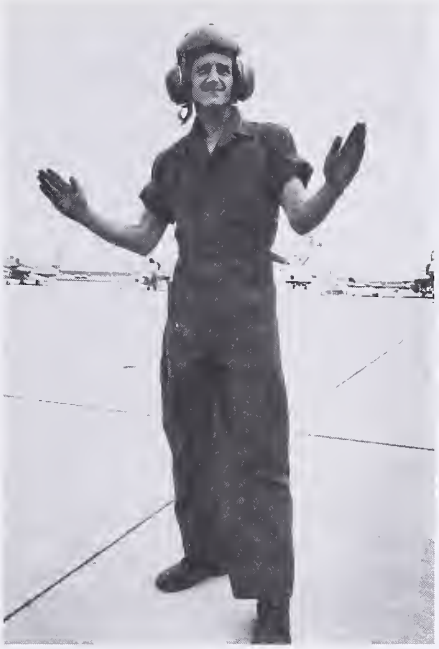

Page 12—Marine plane captains keep the aviation corps flying in safe and well maintained aircraft.

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Front cover: Mastering the art of handling and working with line and rope used to prepare rigging and handle cargo is just one small part of a boatswain's mate's job. (Photo by Bill Pointer)

Back cover: The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Chokeberry, an inland buoy tender, and a 44-foot motor life boat await their next mission while berthed at the Coast Guard station at Hatteras Inlet. (Photo by Capt. Lee J. Hockman)

Profile

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Director
Captain V.L. Knaus, USN

Deputy Director/Managing Editor
Capt. Lee Hockman, USA

Circulation
Tech. Sgt. Willie Taft, USAF

Editors
Tech. Sgt. Wilt Baker, USAF
Sgt. Deb Evans, USMC
Spec. 4 Tracy Tanner, USA

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Working with line and rope used in rigging and handling cargo aboard ship is just one of the many jobs boatswain's mate's perform.

The Navy's Boatswain's mates -

You can see them on every ship and shore station in the Navy—the Navy's jack-of-all-trades and, in this case, master of all trades as well. They are the Navy's boatswain's mates.

Boatswain's mates keep a ship in top condition by maintaining the outside surfaces of the ships. Duties also include maintaining machinery and equipment on the decks, handling cargo and operating small boats. Boatswain's mates receive most of their training at their duty stations in the form of on-the-job training by sailors more experienced in the rating. Most duties are performed outdoors in all environments and weather.

Petty Officer 2nd Class James H. Hersman, serving aboard the frigate USS Blakely, supervises 34 men in the deck department. "Many of the men who work for me are new to the Navy. It takes a lot of patience to teach them basic seamanship. It's important for me to keep up with the people in the department and make sure they're not having problems of any kind.

"All a person needs is common sense to be a boatswain's mate. I like the work because I'm in the open air and not tied down to a steady routine. Something different happens every day."

The boatswain's mate rating is so varied that training never really ceases. An unfamiliar problem may crop up at any time and a boatswain's mate is responsible for the repairs and maintenance of a great deal of a ship's machinery.

MAINTAINING A TIGHT SHIP

Petty Officer 1st Class Reinaldo D. Santiago is a tugmaster stationed at the only U.S. military base on communist soil, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. "I work on a ferry that runs between the naval station and the naval air station," the boatswain's mate said. "In July, after six months training, I was tested by a board and became a qualified tugmaster."

Santiago supervises a crew of six who keep the 22-year-old tugboat operating. Before dawn on duty days, the tug is expected to start moving ships from the pier. Santiago's work may not be finished until late at night when the last ship has returned safely to the pier.

"It's nice being a tugmaster in Gitmo because there's no fog, no currents and hardly any strong wind or heavy rain," he said. "Our tug crew is like a big family. We even have a cat named Fred."

Women work right alongside the men in the boatswain's mate rating doing the same jobs, as in the case of Petty Officer 1st Class Cheryle L. Mills who is assigned to the port services station at Gitmo. Mills operates tugs, ferries, small boats, fuel and waste recovery barges, and in addition, makes arrangements for all Navy and commercial ships that pass in and out of the harbor.

"The most important part of my

Boatswain's mates tie up a camel to their tugboat. A camel is a floating buffer used between a ship and a pier.

Boatswain's mates receive most of their training on-the-job from experienced sailors already in the rating.

job is staying on top of things," Mills said. "I work 12-hour shifts, and things can get hectic. We usually have eight ships at a time here for training. The busiest times are when the ships are getting underway in the morning and when they return in the evening."

In addition to directing traffic in the harbor, Mills and her six coworkers assign berths, provide ships with electrical shore power, water hookups and other required services. The small wooden models Mills moves around the harbor mock-up allows her to keep track of each ship's location.

"The ships' crews really work hard during their training and we try to provide the best service possible to make things easier for them." she said.

Mills worked at the port services small craft facility when she first arrived in Gitmo. "I supervised the work of 20 other boatswain's mates," she said. "Our job was to operate small boats used to transport people, supplies and mail to the ships."

Mills noted that the most challenging part of her job as a boatswain's mate is to do her work well enough to be accepted by her male counterparts. "When I go to a new job I have to work at 150 percent to prove that I am capable of being a good boatswain's mate," Mills said. "But it's not as bad as it was when I first joined the Navy.

"Over the last several years there's been a lot of changes. Women are now assigned to noncombatant ships, and I think the men are seeing that women can do jobs that used to be considered a man's job."

This view is also reflected by Petty Officer 2nd Class Mary R. Laroche serving aboard the USS L.Y. Spear. "I think the biggest challenge I've faced on the ship has been being successful in my job and especially as a woman, being acknowledged by my peers as a competent boatswain's mate." Laroche said. "Initially many of

Boatswain's mates are responsible for checking damage control equipment.

the men were upset over women serving in supervisory positions.

"A woman has to work twice as hard and keep one step ahead. It took six months before most of the men would accept me as a coxswain (a person in charge of a small boat). Once they adjusted to the idea, they saw me as just another shipmate.

"The camaraderie among the crew is foremost," Laroche stated. "At sea it's just us, the ship and the elements. It's a fantastic and very special experience.

"I like working outside, watching the ocean and the weather changing. There are no obstructions to the sky and the stars," she said.

Laroche's duties include coxswain of the ship's small boats, crane operator, safety officer and being a member of the lifeboat crew. "Currently I assist in supervising the maintenance and upkeep of the ship's 11 small boats," she said. "We provide liberty launches and various boat runs, take care of mooring the ship and several other services."

Teamwork is vital to the boatswain's mate rating. The scope and variety of duties in the rate make teamwork and the ability to communicate well with others an important part of training.

Petty Officer 1st Class Jess J. Cramer, serving aboard the aircraft carrier USS America, operates the liberty boats from ship to shore. His boat handling abilities affect many of his shipmates since they depend on him to take them ashore in foreign countries.

Cramer's division has an important role in allowing the America to remain on station conducting flight operations, even when fuel and supplies are beginning to run low.

"We prepare the rigging that's used to bring cargo over from a supply ship," he explained. "While the America and the supply ship steam together at about 100 yards apart, cargo can be brought over the lines we've rigged, or it can be flown over by helicopter."

Petty Officer 3rd Class Charles E. Casner serves aboard the amphibious ship USS Trenton and is responsible for ship replenishment operations.

Casner also works on the amphibious landing craft, keeping them ready to land the Marine troops. "Being a boatswain's mate involves a lot of hard, physical work, and long hours at sea, but I like it," he said. "When we're involved with amphibious operations, the whole ship is working towards one goal: making a successful landing. I get satisfaction from my job knowing I do my part to accomplish our mission."

Even though there are long hard working days and a constant demand for quick decisions, boatswain's mates have a pride in their work that is seldom found with such grueling and adverse working conditions. The Navy's fleet would be hard pressed to function so efficiently without the work of the Navy's boatswain's mate.

Petty Officer 1st Class Cheryle L. Mills directs traffic in the harbor and provides services for visiting ships.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Steven W. Buchanan takes a utility boat to a refueling pier at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The 10 toughest days in the Army

by Fredric Olds

Climbing the troop ladder into a hovering CH-47 Chinook helicopter is a tough task for students at the Air Assault School at Fort Campbell, Ky.

It is billed as the 10 toughest days in the Army. For the soldiers who do graduate from the Air Assault School at Fort Campbell, Ky., it proves to be just that.

This demanding course subjects students to grueling tests of physical and psychological stamina which prepare them for operations involving helicopters as well as building the confidence soldiers need for combat. Only half of the students in any class that begin the course will earn their wings on day 10.

The Air Assault School had its roots in the airmobile concept which developed during the Vietnam War. In Vietnam, the Army used helicopters to move troops rapidly across the battlefield to meet contingencies as they arose. It was a concept that provided flexibility and speed.

When the Vietnam War ended, the main focus of the U.S. military turned to Europe, a much different theater of operations than Southeast Asia. It was felt that more emphasis had to be placed on armored units. The Army believed the light infantry units in helicopters would be unsuitable and too vulnerable.

Further evaluations revealed that the helicopter was not the easy prey it had been thought to be. A

An Air Assault student rappeller flips over after slowing his descent from a UH-1 Huey helicopter. The students make day and night rappels from heights of 100 feet.

valid need was recognized for the rapid mobility provided by helicopter-borne infantry. It was from this assessment that the 101st Airborne Division was assigned the mission of developing the tactics and logistics plans for helicopter operations in the European middle intensity, conventional forces scenario.

Initially these operations were planned as a blueprint of Vietnam tactics. But, it became necessary to go beyond the airmobile concept to provide total mobility of the division rather than its troops alone. An enlarged vision of the role of the helicopter developed in which the choppers were an integral part of the division. Helicopters were no longer mere taxis: they became the focal point around which tactics and logistics were designed. The new concept was designated air assault.

As this concept developed, the division leadership realized that it required some means of maintaining the skills it acquired in the Vietnam War, while exploring new helicopter techniques to increase the capabilities of the unit. It was from that desire to teach skills for helicopter operations that the Air Assault School was born. The original course grew from five days into seven and now to 10. It is divided into three phases, each about three days long.

In the first phase students are taught the history of air assault and its uses in armies throughout the world. They are familiarized with

UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters drop off students during a combat assault exercise. The combat assault phase of the school teaches soldiers the skills they will need in attacking enemy positions from helicopters.

aircraft, given safety briefings and taught pathfinder techniques, which includes land navigation. These lessons prepare the students for the day and night combat assaults.

The students are flown to the ranges at Fort Campbell to conduct air assaults. During the night phase the students are dropped at the range to conduct a simulated assault and set up a landing zone. If the student has mastered the techniques taught in school, uses the proper light and hand signals, he is excused. If not, he repeats the exercise until it is done correctly.

The course is consistent throughout. Students are not harrassed, but they are held to high standards, and they live by the consequences of their actions. Each day students are inspected for uniform, appearance, and attitude. Any deficiency results in demerits being assessed, which may be worked off or cancelled by merits. The worst penalty, however, may be the five pound brick a soldier is given to put in his rucksack for missing any piece of equipment. One of the questions asked of students is how much a dog tag weighs. The answer is always five pounds.

This is not nit picking explains Capt. Douglas Doty, commandant of the Air Assault School. "We have one of the most uncompromising courses in the Army. We demand that soldiers maintain the highest standards of attitude and performance at all times. They must master every skill and pass every test. Giving it a good try isn't enough. It's a matter of being the best soldier you can be, but more importantly, it's a matter of confidence and safety."

The school teaches dangerous and sometimes frightening skills. A soldier who hasn't learned the basic skills or a soldier who is not confident enough in his or her capability is more likely to have an accident or impede the progress of the others.

This becomes evident in phase II of the course—rappelling. Students begin with ground instruction and progress from a 12-foot slanted tower to the 35-foot tower to actual helicopter rappelling. Sliding down a 100-foot rope suspended beneath a helicopter demands skill, but it also demands guts. It is the confidence gained from previous exercises and instruction that gives the soldiers that self-assurance.

During phase II students also scale a 60-foot rope ladder swinging beneath a CH-47 Chinook helicopter, swirling in the 100-miles per hour prop wash. The students then proceed to the troop landing platform, a 12-foot square wire mesh platform suspended atop a 50-foot tree. They jump from a hovering helicopter onto the

Soldiers paddle away from a CH-47 "Chinook" helicopter during a waterborne operation. This is one of the many ways the helicopter can insert troops into combat.

platform and then rappel to the ground.

The third phase is what Capt. Doty calls the bread and butter of the school—rigging and sling loading. In this phase soldiers learn the skills required to prepare equipment for transportation by helicopter. Loads of varying sizes are equipped with slings and hardware to be carried externally by helicopters. Students do the actual rigging of equipment, guide in the helicopters and hook up the loads. This instruction is designed to familiarize students with the skills they will use in the air assault division or other units which utilize helicopters.

Another major goal of the school is to build the physical strength of the soldiers. There is plenty of physical training. Beginning on day one, classes run or march two to five miles, practice some type of hand-to-hand combat and do log PT, where each student is assigned to a 400-pound log along with seven other students. The soldier then has about 50 pounds to lift while performing sit-ups, back bends and presses. Of course, the weight varies if other students fail to work their allotted portion. It is an exercise that develops both strength and teamwork.

Then there is the confidence course: nine obstacles, each of which is not insurmountable, but when taken one after the other wear a soldier out quickly. The obstacles involve climbing, swinging, weaving and jumping. Each obstacle must be successfully negotiated for graduation.

The most difficult test comes on the final day of the course. It is a 10-mile forced march over paved and gravel roads. Most students have to run about half the course to finish in the two-hour-20-minutes allotted. This is the final requirement of the school. Those who make it graduate that afternoon.

"What we hope to produce in this school," says Capt. Doty, "is a soldier who is the best soldier he can be. One who is confident that he or she can do more than they thought possible. A soldier a commander can count upon."

It is that kind of soldier that graduates every 10 days from the Air Assault School. There is almost an electric excitement in the graduates. They tested their limits and found more within themselves than they knew they had. They also found that kind of friendship and support in others that comes from shared hardships. It is a lesson in individual perserverance and unit esprit. Exactly the skills and attitudes the commander needs to get the job done in every circumstance imaginable.

A student rappels down a 35-foot tower at the Air Assault School. Students learn the basic skills on the ground before attempting the 35-foot tower or helicopter rappelling.

The Air Assault School trains soldiers to rig and sling load equipment.

Plane captains-

Pilots bet their lives on them

by Cpl. Steve Balkin

During the Vietnam War, a pilot was in his aircraft preparing to fly a combat mission. He was ready to taxi to the runway, but didn't receive the customary salute from his plane captain. He turned his aircraft around, returned to his spot on the flight line, and shut the aircraft down. He wasn't going to fly this mission.

When the pilot didn't receive the customary salute from his plane captain, he assumed the worst and decided to recheck his aircraft before taking off. This is one example of the trust between a pilot and a plane captain.

That last salute from the plane captain before taking off is the signal that command of the aircraft is in the hands of the pilot. While on the ground, the aircraft is the responsibility of the plane captain.

Plane captains are a breed apart. Pilots fly the planes, but it is the plane captain and the ground crews who keep them airborne and combat ready.

First Lt. J.D. Nichols, a bombadier/navigator with Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 224, at Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, N.C., flying the A-6E Intruder, said, "When you are in the cockpit of the Intruder there

Lance Cpl. James Tokoph, a Marine plane captain, checks the cockpit of an A-6E Intruder. He is responsible for the overall performance of the aircraft.

Plane captains Lance Cpls. James Tokoph (right) and Franklin Jenkins check the engine of an A-6E Intruder. Teamwork makes the job less difficult.

are a lot of things that you can't see, but the plane captains can. You bet your life on them."

Marines do not become plane captains overnight. It takes months of formal education, a period of on-the-job (OJT) training, and then back to school to pass a test given by a review board. Marines agree that after being designated a plane captain, learning doesn't stop. They can never know everything there is to know about their aircraft.

Leathernecks selected to be plane captains begin their education by attending the Machinist Mate Course at Jet Mechanic School, Naval Air Station, Memphis, Tenn. This course is self-paced, normally lasting three to six weeks, covering theories behind jet engines, as well as the engine as a whole.

Upon completion of this course, Marines receive orders to one of the Marine aircraft wings. At their new duty station, the Memphis graduates are assigned a specific aircraft to be trained on.

At Cherry Point, home of the Second Marine Aircraft Wing, if a Marine is designated to train on the A-4 Skyhawk or the AV-8A Harrier, he will be assigned to Training Management Element 21 and then sent out to a squadron. During this time, Marines receive on-the-job training with a squadron as well as attend classes at the Naval Air Maintenance Training Group Detachment.

Now begins a period of OJT on a specific aircraft. The Leathernecks will be put through a rigid training schedule while being monitored by experienced plane captains. They will learn pressurized oil maintenance (preoiling), fueling, defueling, taxiing, main gear and tire wheel assembly, daily turn arounds and hand signals.

The future plane captain will learn everything that is necessary to keep their "bird" 100 percent mission ready. At the end of the on-the-job training period with the squadron, the Marine will return to the classroom for two weeks of study and testing.

Staff Sgt. David Spencer, a line chief (coordinator for the plane captain's daily schedule) said, "The rate at which a Marine progresses through the OJT period depends on the individual. He will be instructed in a certain area, and upon completion he will be tested before moving on to the next area of study."

Plane captains designated to work on the A-6 Intruder or the EA-6B Prowler will receive the same amount of training, but their formal schooling will not be with their duty squadrons. Marines that are to work on the Intrduer will have their OJT with their squadron

'Pride! As a plane captain the personal satisfaction I get is tremendous. I assume more responsibility and I get to see the results of my work.'

Lance Cpl. James Tokoph checks the wiring on a bomb rack. It is one of the many components for which he is responsible.

and then go to Naval Air Station, Oceana, Va., for schooling. Prowler plane captains will receive their schooling at the Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island, Wash.

At the end of OJT and schooling, and prior to being designated a plane captain, a Marine will go before a review board for certification. The aviation maintenance officer, safety officer, line chief, line division officer and the quality assurance officer will usually sit on this board.

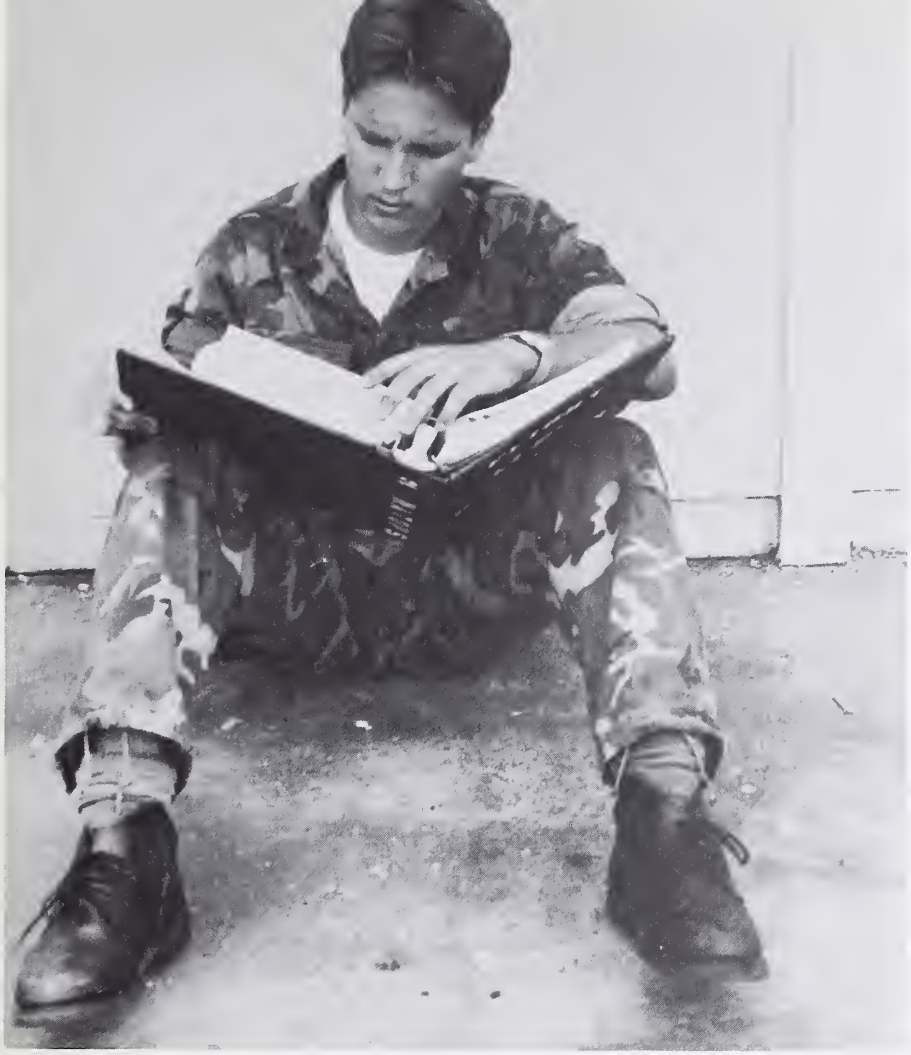
A Marine who has just memorized what he is supposed to know will not pass. A certain amount of memorization is necessary, such as tire pressures, hydraulic pressures (minimums and maximums for safe flight), quantities—oil, fuel, hydraulic and oxygen—to name a few; however, much more is involved. This screening is a tension-filled interview where everything the plane captain has learned can, and will, be asked.

Lance Cpl. James A. Tokoph, a plane captain, who along with Sgt. Chris Kornreich, were recently awarded the Navy Achievement Medal for saving an aircraft and the lives of the pilot and bombadier/navigator, said, "The reason the interview is tough is because the board wants to see how you will act under pressure. Most of the questions are about emergency procedures."

Lance Cpl. Franklin Jenkins added, "If you get through the board, don't think you've got it beat. Every year a plane captain must go in front of a board to keep the designation of plane captain."

"You are a jack of all trades and a master of none," Lance Cpl. Tokoph explained. "When a pilot lands an aircraft he will tell the plane captain about any gripes on the aircraft."

From the plane captain, the "gripe sheet" will go to maintenance control, and the proper shop will be assigned to do what needs to be done. When the air-



Plane captains must continually study maintenance manuals to sustain their knowledge of the aircraft's systems.

craft is ready to fly again, it is the plane captain's responsibility to ensure it is mission capable.

Why would anyone want to be a plane captain? "Plane captains are usually the first to arrive on the flight line and the last to leave," said Staff Sgt. Spencer. "They are responsible for pre-flighting the bird before take-off and securing the bird at day's end.

"Just because the bird you launched in the morning landed right before lunch doesn't mean you can secure. Plane captains are not responsible for just one aircraft, but for all of them on the flight line. This is where teamwork comes into play."

In blistering heat, bitter cold and for long hours, plane captains are on the line. Why? Lance Cpl. Jenkins summed it up in one word, "Pride! As a plane captain the personal satisfaction I get is tremendous. I assume more responsibility and I get to see the results of my work. I also honor the respect I get from the pilots that fly the jets I work on."

In today's world where everyone has a specialty, plane captains remain "a jack of all trades." They are highly trained individuals who are responsible, not for one part of the aircraft, but for the bird in its entirety.

They work long hours, wear ear protection and talk with their hands, but still they enlist for that aviation guarantee. For the plane captain, the field is small and the work is hard, but the rewards are high. Aside from flying the aircraft, being a plane captain is the best job in the aviation community.

Using hand and arm signals, plane captains direct aircraft to and from their spaces on the parking ramp.

Tech. Sgt. Myron DuBose, a loadmaster with the 41st Military Airlift Squadron, Charleston AFB, S.C., overseas troops loading on his C-141 Starlifter.

Loadmasters pack and deliver the AIR Force way

by 2nd Lt. A.V. Stephenson

The rolling, pine-covered terrain surrounding Fort Bragg's Sicily Drop Zone in North Carolina draws into sharp focus as the camouflaged C-130 Hercules cargo transport aircraft begins its descent.

Staff Sgt. Kenneth A. Lyon, loadmaster with the 40th Tactical Airlift Squadron, Pope Air Force Base, N.C., works his way around the aircraft's load as he rapidly goes through the pre-drop checklist.

That load is one of the U.S. Army's anti-personnel vehicles—a medium-sized tank. Its destination is a small, 300-yard portion of the nearly three-mile long drop zone.

Staff Sgt. Lyon stays in continuous contact with the aircraft's commander—the pilot. At the four-minute mark, with the C-130's turboprop engines humming as the

A C-130 Hercules airdrops a tank during a low altitude parachute extraction.

The C-5 Galaxy's loadmasters offload a U.S. Navy submersible vehicle.

plane's descent is slowed, he begins to open the aircraft's rear doors. A few moments later, a trio of parachutes are fired out that opening.

The "Herky" begins to creak as the parachutes strain to pull the load from its locked position inside the aircraft. Staff Sgt. Lyon confirms with his commander over the intership radio that the drop is still a "go."

Now the aircraft is only a few feet off the surface of the drop zone, flying at about 150 miles per hour. The staff sergeant presses a button and the vehicle slides out the rear of the aircraft, sliding to a stop on target. Lyon announces, "Load clear," over the radio and the pilot puts the aircraft into a climb.

As a loadmaster in the Air Force, Staff Sgt. Lyon shares the responsibility with his fellow aircrew members of delivering their cargo fast, safely and on target.

"We have a variety of ways to get the job done," he explains. "When we come in at low altitude, it is called a LAPES drop—the low altitude, parachute extraction system. It's the fastest form of aerial delivery."

Other forms of aerial delivery include container delivery system drops (supplies and equipment air dropped by parachutes on pallets) and the standard air-to-land system where the aircraft simply lands and unloads its cargo.

"No one method is my favorite, but I do prefer carrying troops to cargo. You get a chance to meet a bunch of people, if even for a short while," he said.

Lyon began his Air Force career as an inventory management specialist at Hill AFB, Utah. After four years, he crosstrained into the loadmaster field.

His initial loadmaster training began at Sheppard AFB, Texas, with six weeks of basic loadmaster training. This course includes basic emergency procedures, aircraft equipment and weight and balance formulas. He was also taught basic rigging and loading. All initial loadmaster training is conducted at Sheppard's training facilities. After completion of the Sheppard course, Lyon and other C-130 loadmasters attended a 90 day course at Little Rock AFB, Ark., to prepare for work on the Herky.

At Little Rock, students are taught loading and off loading functions, preflight and post-flighting of aircraft systems and knowledge of types, capacity and configuration of different loads. This includes weight and balance factors, cargo restraint techniques, interpretation of diagrams, loading charts and operation of cargo loading equipment.

Loadmasters for the C-5 and C-

141 aircraft go through similar courses at Altus AFB, Okla.

Once loadmaster training is completed, all crew members attend aircraft survival schools in Florida and Washington state before being assigned to an active flying unit. Air Force officials say that more than six months of training are completed before airmen arrive at their permanent duty stations.

The Military Airlift Command, headquartered at Scott AFB, Ill., is the single manager for all Department of Defense airlift operations. To accomplish this mission, MAC uses three aircraft—the C-5 Galaxy, C-130 Hercules and C-141 Starlifter.

While all MAC aircraft carry cargo and passengers, the C-141 Starlifter seems to be in its best form when streamers of parachutes are pouring out its sides during a troop drop.

"The Starlifter is primarily a cargo aircraft, but when there is a need, it can transport and airdrop troops with the best of them," says Tech. Sgt. Myron DuBose, a loadmaster with the 41st Military Airlift Squadron, Charleston AFB, S.C.

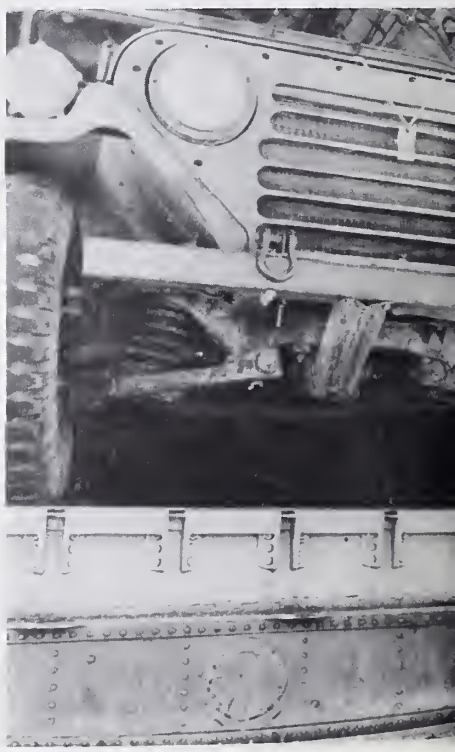
"As a loadmaster, when my aircraft is carrying troops, I become their safety monitor. Our job is to get them to their destination safely and I take that duty very seriously."

Most loadmasters share that same philosophy. During a recent training exercise in South Korea, a group of Korean parachuters exited their C-130 Hercules, but there was one hitch—one of the soldiers' static lines became tangled and he was suspended from the rear of the aircraft.

The Herky's two loadmasters, Senior Airmen Tom Lynch and Eddit Garcia from Pope AFB, risked their lives to save the Korean soldier. Both men credited the

Staff Sgt. Kevin Kulig, a loadmaster with the 9th Military Airlift Squadron, Dover AFB, Del., prepares an Army helicopter for loading into the C-5 Galaxy.

Staff Sgt. Kenneth Lyon inspects a vehicle prior to its flight aboard the C-130 Hercules.



successful rescue to their Air Force training.

"I think all loadmasters are basically the same," says Staff Sgt. Kevin Kulig, a loadmaster with the 9th Military Airlift Squadron, Dover AFB, Del., "but in my case, I don't fly as much as my counterparts who fly in C-130s or C-141s." The staff sergeant flies aboard the C-5 Galaxy. It is the world's largest aircraft, measuring almost the length of a football field.

"Because of its massive size, we are usually reserved for what I believe are rather unique missions," says Staff Sgt. Kulig. "We can haul almost anything. If an oversized load pops up and someone has to have it fast...we're the ones they call."

One of those "unique" missions chalked up by the Galaxy centered around a group of seamen trapped aboard their submarine off the coast of Scotland. The U.S. Navy had the means to rescue the crew—a 75,000 pound deep submergence rescue vehicle—but time was essential. This deep sea, bullet-shaped diving vessel fit easily into the Galaxy's immense cargo area and with the aid of aerial refueling, the C-5 flew non-stop to the sailors' aid.

Tech. Sgt. Kennie Day, an instructor loadmaster with the 9th MAS shares Staff Sgt. Kulig's views about the C-5. "Our aircraft is unique in size, but with that increased load capability, comes an increase in responsibility," says Tech. Sgt. Day. "It takes more time to check all the various systems during preflight and we need three loadmasters where other transports only use one or two.

"I've flown in all the command's aircraft, and I would enjoy working on any of them. Whether it be checking out the Galaxy during a preflight checklist, handling a LAPES drop on board a Herky or making a load of troops comfortable in a Starlifter, it's all the same. You're a loadmaster. That's what counts."

A loadmaster walks toward his aircraft prior to an airlift mission at Pope AFB, N.C.

Group Cape Hatteras

Challenging the Outer Banks

Story and photos by
Capt. Lee J. Hockman

The history of the Outer Banks on the North Carolina coast is replete with stories about ships in distress and shipwrecks. The area is called the "Graveyard of the Atlantic." Men have manned stations here for more than a century and they have braved the same dangers of the sea that threatened the lives of those they were rescuing. The presence of the men and women of U.S. Coast Guard Group Cape Hatteras continues this legacy of assistance to mariners.

The duties of Group Cape Hatteras, like the Coast Guard anywhere, are search and rescue, maintaining aids to navigation and maritime law enforcement. The Group's area of operations stretches more than 135 miles, from the Virginia-North Carolina border to just south of Ocracoke Island. It encompasses the Chowan River, the Albermarle Sound and parts of the Pamlico Sound, extending 50 miles out into the Atlantic Ocean.

To accomplish the task of covering this vast area, the Group has 130 personnel and 18 boats, ranging from the 82-foot ocean-going Coast Guard Cutter Point Brown to 17-foot shallow draft boats. Group Headquarters is located in Buxton, N.C. within sight of the Cape Hatteras lighthouse. There are four stations in the Group; Coinjock, the northernmost station; Oregon Inlet, which is located at the first passage to the Pamlico Sound and the first access to the Intercoastal Waterway south of the Chesapeake Bay; Hatteras Inlet, at the next inlet to the south; and Ocracoke, the southernmost station, accessible only by boat, ferry or airplane.

Group Headquarters is located near the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, one of the most well-known landmarks on the Outer Banks.

In addition, there is the Aids to Navigation Team at Oregon Inlet with a 55-foot buoy tender and at Hatteras Inlet there is the Coast Guard Cutter Chokeberry, an inland buoy tender. Together these tenders service more than 550 aids to navigation, including lights, dayboards, buoys and lighthouses. Servicing the aids encompasses recharging batteries on lights, changing lamps and flashers, as well as responding to reported problems.

Aids are much like traffic signals. Different shapes and colors are used, depending on the place and condition, to direct boat traffic. Maintaining the lights and dayboards is not too difficult since they are stationary. Buoys, on the other hand, are temporary markers that must be moved as channel conditions change. Oregon Inlet presents the biggest challenge becaue northeasterly winds constantly shift sand and alter the channel.

Aside from being the roughest channel, Oregon Inlet is also the busiest. It is used heavily by the larger commercial fishing boats operating on the Outer Banks. For this reason, the Coast Guard Cutter Point Brown operates out of the station located at Oregon Inlet.

The Point Brown, an 82-foot patrol boat with a 10 man crew, moved to Oregon Inlet in May 1981 to provide Group Cape Hatteras with the capability to handle offshore rescue missions

involving the large fishing vessels. The cutter is equipped with radar, navigation and radio-communications equipment to facilitate locating vessels in distress. The crew lives on board when in port and is on standby on two hour recall three weeks out of four. The cutter's primary mission is search and rescue for disabled vessels and sailboats in distress, but it is also available for law enforcement operations when required.

Master Chief Petty Officer "Apple" Daniels, the officer-in-charge of the Point Brown, feels that being on an 82-footer is the best duty in the Coast Guard. "It's a good job as far as seeing what the Coast Guard is about and being involved in the action. It's good experience, especially for first termers. If they can do their job on this boat, they can make it anywhere in the Coast Guard."

Petty Officer 1st Class Steven Price agrees. "An 82-footer is good duty. You learn a lot. You've got the same requirements as a large cutter, where there are more men to fulfill the job." Price, whose responsibilities include administration, supply, purchasing and operations, said the varied experience gives him an advantage when taking the service-wide exam to qualify for promotion.

Since moving to Oregon Inlet last year, the Point Brown has been involved in two spectacular rescues of sailing boats in heavy weather. In both instances the Point Brown towed the boats to safety through waves in excess of 30 feet and winds of more than 60 miles an hour. Whether involved in situations such as these or aiding the stranded boater in calm water, the dedication and training of the personnel are evident.

"The people in the Group are very professional," said Lt. Herman Pritchard, commander of Group Cape Hatteras. "They take pride in being able to meet the challenge that the Outer Banks offers. The Outer Banks provide some of the

Crewmembers perform routine maintenance on the Coast Guard Cutter Point Brown. A hawser, used for towing boats, is hung out to dry.

Seaman George Fleming checks one of the two .50-caliber machine guns on the Point Brown. The cutter is also equipped with small arms.

Crewmembers hoist a nun buoy onto the Coast Guard Cutter Chokeberry. Nun buoys are temporary channel markers held in place by weights.

roughest waters you are going to be confronted with on the East Coast. If you don't meet the challenge with a mature professionalism, there's no way you're going to tackle the sea, much less help the boater. And that's all we're trying to do—help people.

"Our search and rescue season never stops," Pritchard continued. "We have the pleasure boaters in the summer. We have the commercial fishing people here in the fall. The workload slows down for a very short time, but it builds back up."

Each station stands a continuous radio watch, monitoring international and national distress frequencies. In addition, stations provide a report on local weather conditions to Group Headquarters every three hours. Stations also provide information to local citizens about boating regulations and safety.

By maintaining radio surveillance, the stations are able to respond immediately to any call for assistance in their operating area or to any situation as directed by Group Headquarters. Calls may be minor in nature or they may be life threatening situations which depend upon prompt, efficient response from a well-trained crew. Stations keep one or more boat crews on standby, depending on the time of year. Daily training and drills help to keep boat crews ready for any contingency.

When a distress call is received, whether at Group or at one of the stations, the personnel on duty must decide what resources to commit to the effort. Each boat available has different capabilities, and the decision is based on where the help is needed, the weather conditions and the magnitude of the problem.

If it is rough water and the vessel is fairly distant offshore, the 82-foot cutter Point Brown is the choice because its greater range, superior speed and larger crew provides more stamina for prolonged operations. A 44-foot motor life boat can be used in heavy weather also, but it is slower and has a smaller crew. Forty-one-foot utility boats are available for use in moderate weather when a fast response is required. Each station also has boats in the 17- to 21-foot range, which are high speed, shallow draft, quick response boats for use in mild weather. Additionally, these smaller boats provide accessibility to shallow water areas.

"Every search and rescue mission has the potential to become a life or death situation," stated Petty Officer 1st Class Jim Carroll, Group operations officer. "When deciding to send the 82 or the 44 for search and rescue, we don't look at dollars. Saving life and property is more important."

"We average about 250 search and rescue cases per year," said Chief Petty Officer James McQueen, officer-in-charge of the station at Oregon Inlet. Each station averages about the same number of cases during the year. These cases include "small boats out of gas, medevacing (medical evacuation) people off boats, grounded vessels, lines in propellers, just about anything."

"In the summer months it's mostly small pleasure boats," McQueen added. "In the wintertime is when we get our worst cases, which are usually offshore or in the inlet. They are the bad ones. The weather is the reason. There is always a bad northeasterly wind and the channel is always rough."

In addition to search and rescue

A 44-foot motor life boat and a 41-foot utility boat practice maneuvering alongside, a procedure used to take a boat in tow.

at sea, there are other problems associated with the Outer Banks that require Coast Guard assistance. The popularity of four-wheel drive vehicles coupled with incoming tides creates emergency situations where the Coast Guard must tow vehicles from the surf to prevent damage or loss.

"The beach sand in this area is a real nightmare," said Chief Petty Officer John M. Davis, officer-in-charge of the station at Hatteras Inlet. "People unfamiliar with this area think that beacuase they've got four-wheel drive they can drive anywhere. We're constantly rescuing vehicles that venture too close to the water. The sand sucks them right down to the axles. A couple of days ago we towed one who got stuck when the tide was coming in. He was out in the water about 100 feet, luckily the water was not real deep."

Group Cape Hatteras also participates in law enforcement activities, usually involving drug smuggling. The Group's boats are often used as platforms for police or agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration or U.S. Customs; however, Coast Guard personnel board boats as well, acting on tips from local law enforcement agencies.

"Training is important," stated Lt. Pritchard. "We must make sure that the people who do board have that level of expertise, of professionalism, and of maturity to go on and make judgment calls (while boarding) a boat. We have to rely on that from our people."

Whether combating drug trafficking or dealing with adverse weather, "You have to work as a team, always," said Chief Deputy Sheriff Bert Austin of Dare County, N.C., which includes Cape Hatteras. "We have one of the closest relationships we've ever had."

This spirit of cooperation is part of the tradition of the Coast Guard's presence on the Outer Banks. It is as much a part of day to day operations as it is during emergency situations. The Coast Guard Auxiliary is very prominent in the area and it provides assistance that is greatly appreciated by the Coast Guard and local citizens.

"We have a very active Coast Guard Auxiliary here," stated Chief Petty Officer McQueen. "They put out a lot of information for us and they volunteer their time to assist us. They teach classes on sailing and seamanship as well as help on search and rescue cases."

"They teach the boating public how to help themselves and each other," said Chief Warrant Officer Henry Styron, executive officer of Group Cape Hatteras. "They reach a lot of people. We cut down on the number of search and rescue and assist-type cases through their help."

The Coast Guard's presence on the Outer Banks has been an integral part of the history of the area. Through their efforts many lives have been saved and many thousands of dollars of property has been preserved. As long as there are people who venture out on to the water, whether for fun or profit, they will know that the Coast Guard is ready and able to help if needed.

Built in 1874, the station at Oregon Inlet is a living reminder of the history of the life saving service on the Outer Banks.

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Coast Guard to the rescue

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